

## Family Connection during tough times...Resources & Support during COVID-19

### Mental Health and Coping During COVID-19

The outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is creating stress for people, families and communities. Fear and anxiety about our current situation can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults, children and youth. **Please remember you are not alone.** The Here to Help Coordinators Group (from the following agencies: CDI, JF&CS, La Maison, NC&FS, Yorktown, YWCA Toronto) would like to share some resources that you and your family may find helpful at this time.

### For Parents:

Children and youth react, in part, to what they see from the adults around them. When parents and caregivers deal with the COVID-19 calmly and confidently, they can provide the best support to their children and youth. Parents can be reassuring to their family if they have support, practice self-care and are prepared. The following information may be helpful to understanding reactions children/youth may have to the current situation and offer some supportive ideas on how to manage these challenging times:

**Not all children and youth respond to stress in the same way. Some common changes to watch for may include:**

- Excessive worry, fear and sadness
- An increase in crying and/or irritation
- Returning to behaviors they have outgrown (e.g., toileting accidents or bedwetting with younger children, regressive talk, need for more parental attention/physical comfort and connection)
- Unhealthy eating or sleeping habits (e.g., over/under eating/sleeping, difficulty falling asleep, nightmares)
- Irritability and “acting out” behaviors (e.g., anger or argumentative towards caregivers/siblings)
- Poor school performance or avoiding school
- Difficulty with attention and concentration
- Avoidance of activities enjoyed in the past
- Unexplained headaches or body pain
- Use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs in youth

**There are many things you can do to support your children and youth:**

- Take time to talk with your child/youth about the COVID-19 outbreak. Answer questions and share facts about COVID-19 in a way that your child/youth can understand.

- Reassure your child/youth that they are safe. Let them know it is ok if they feel upset or worried. Acknowledge and validate their thoughts and feelings. Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn how to cope from you.
- Limit your child’s exposure to media coverage of the event. Children may misinterpret what they hear and can be frightened by what they do not understand. Spend time with your child/youth discussing the media coverage they do consume – review facts versus myths. Co-create a plan with youth to limit media exposure that creates fear or anxiety.
- Help your child/youth develop a sense of structure as it creates safety. While at home, consider a routine that offers learning, purpose and family connection. Take advantage of the extra together time you may have with family to explore activities you enjoy. Once it is safe to return to school or childcare, help your child/youth embrace their regular routine as they may have concerns or worries about returning to routine.
- Be a role model; take breaks, get plenty of sleep, exercise, and eat well. Connect with your friends and family members and rely on your social support system in ways that are safe and comforting to you.

Source - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirusncov>

## Resources and Support

We wanted to provide you with some helpful links and contact information that may help you and your family during these tough times. The following pages will provide you with information about COVID-19, how to discuss concerns with your child/youth, some fun stuff to do during your time together at home, as well as some links to additional resources you may find helpful.

### Self-Care for Parents and Caregivers

- [Taking care of yourself as a parent so you can be there for your kids](#)
- [Calm.com: Take a Deep Breath](#)
- [Coronavirus: Ten Reasons Why You Ought not to Panic](#)

### Self-Care for Survivors of Abuse:

- **Assaulted Women’s Helpline: [www.awhl.org](http://www.awhl.org) (1-866-863-0511)**
- [Staying safe during COVID-19](#)
- <https://www.ourresilience.org/self-care-during-covid-19/>

**Discussing COVID-19 with your children:**

- [MindHeart.co – COVIBOOK – Supporting and reassuring children around the world](#) (various languages)
  - [English language book](#)
  - [French language book](#)
- [Psychology Today – How to talk to your kids about COVID-19](#)
- [PBS Newshour – 10 tips for talking about COVID-19 with your kids](#)
- [SAANICH Schools – Talking to Kids and Teens about COVID-19](#)
- [Children’s Mental Health Ontario – Talking to your anxious child about COVID-19: Tips for Parents and Caregivers](#)
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\) -Helping children cope with stress during the 2019-nCoV outbreak](#)

**Fun things to do while you are home:**

- [Activities to do at home during school closures](#)
- <https://kidsactivitiesblog.com/135609/list-of-education-companies-offering-free-subscriptions/>
- [Mindful Monkey: meditation for children](#)
- Virtual websites where you can “visit” museums, art galleries and NASA:
  - [The Met \(NYC\)](#)
  - [Museum of Modern Art \(MoMA\) \(NYC\)](#)
  - [Guggenheim Museum \(NYC, Venice, Bilbao\)](#)
  - [Salvador Dali Theatre-Museum \(Barcelona\)](#)
  - [NASA \(USA\)](#)
  - [Royal Ontario Museum \(ROM\) \(Toronto\)](#)
    - [Online Collections](#)
  - [Vancouver Art Gallery](#)
  - [Canadian Museum of History – Morning Star \(English and French\)](#)
  - [Canadian Museum of History – On Online Exhibit of Inuit Prints from Cape Dorset](#)
- Toronto Resource Site for "at home" activities:
  - <https://www.toronto4kids.com/>
- [Scholastic: Learn at Home](#)
- [TVOKids.com](#)
- [Toronto Public Library](#)
- [Mississauga Library](#)

**Here to Help / Enfants Témoins Contact Information:**

- [Child Development Institute](#)
- [Jewish Family & Child Service](#)
- [La Maison \(French\)](#)
- [Native Child & Family Services of Toronto](#)
- [Yorktown Family Services](#)
- [YWCA Toronto](#)

**Support & Mental Health Resources:**

- [Assaulted Women’s Help Line](#) or 416-863-0511 or 1-866-863-0511
- [Kids Help Phone](#) or 1-800-668-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868
- [Distress Centres of Greater Toronto](#) or 416-408-4357 or text 45645
- [Distress Centres and Crisis Lines in Ontario](#) (English and French) or 1-866-518-0000
- [1 in 6 Men’s Helpline Chat](#) – For Men, Non-Binary, and Trans Folks
- [What’s up Walk-in Telephone Counselling](#) – phone-in appointments only
- Over-the-Phone Crisis Support:
  - ***For people of all ages, genders, and sexual orientations***
    - **Gerstein Crisis Centre (24/7):** 416-929-5200
    - **Toronto Distress Centre (24/7):** 416-408-4357 or text 741741 (2am-2pm daily)
  - ***For people under 20 years old***
    - **Kids Help Phone: (24/7)** 1-800-668-6868
  - ***For people 65+ years old***
    - **Crisis Outreach Service for Seniors (9:00am-5:00pm daily):** 416-217-2077
- Mental Health Peer Support:
  - ***LGBT Youth Line – peer support by and for people 29 and under***
    - Call 1-800-268-9688 | Text 647-694-4275 | Chat [www.youthline.ca](http://www.youthline.ca)
- Progress Place Warmline – peer support hotline
  - Call 416-960-9276 | Text 647-557-5882 | Chat [www.warmline.ca](http://www.warmline.ca)
- Yorktown Family Services - [Urban Tele-Mental Health \(UTMH\)](#)

**Food Services: (Please call first before going)**

- [Daily Break Food Bank](#)
  - 191 New Toronto Street | 416-203-0050 | info@dailybread.ca
  - Check the website or phone for updates regarding the changing situation
- [The Stop Food Bank](#)
  - 1884 Davenport Road | 416-652-2294
  - For those in the catchment area: Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 12-3pm; call to confirm
- [North York Harvest Food Bank](#)
  - Multiple Locations | 416-635-7771 ext. 0 | info@northyorkharvest.com
  - Phone the referral line or email them to determine what food banks are still open and how to gain access
- [The Scott Mission](#)
  - Various Locations
  - 502 Spadina Avenue: Prepackaged groceries will be provided at front doors located at the northern end; prepackaged take away meals will be available at the south end of the building
  - 1550 O'Connor Drive: Prepackaged groceries will be available every Tuesday from the front doors
- If you can't leave your home:
  - Continue to check the news. Many companies are offering free or reduced rate delivery. Also check out the Facebook groups listed below for community supports.
    - <https://www.citynews1130.com/2020/03/13/loblaws-reducing-fees-for-grocery-delivery-eliminating-those-for-pick-up-amid-covid-19-outbreak/>
    - <https://techcrunch.com/2020/03/16/uber-eats-waives-delivery-fees-for-independent-restaurants-during-covid-19-pandemic/>
- Drop-In Centres, Free Meals, and other supports:
  - [The 519 Community Centre](#)
    - 519 Church Street | | 416-355-6782
    - Monday to Friday: Take away meals given out at 1pm and 4pm
    - Saturday and Sunday: Take away meals given out at 12:30pm
    - Come to the Fabarnak Café patio to receive your meal
  - [Drop-In at 1884 Davenport](#)
    - 1884 Davenport Road | 416-652-7867 ext. 227
    - Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays: Take away meals only; 9-10am for breakfast and 12-1pm for lunch

- [Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre](#)
  - 439 Dundas Street East | | 416-360-4350
  - Serving meals outside of the building in place of regular drop-in food programming; call to confirm
- [211 Central](#)
  - 24/7 | TTY 1-888-340-1001
  - Live Text Chat Support available Monday-Friday 7am-9pm by texting 21166
- [Chalmers Bot](#)
  - 24/7
  - A web/phone app that uses your current location to find the closest free meal/drop-in/clothing resource/etc.

#### **Dental Health Services:**

- [Royal College of Dentistry](#) *(for information on emergency dental services currently available)*
- [City of Toronto low cost dental facilities](#)

#### **Other Emergency Services:**

- LGBTQ2S Youth Housing Help:
  - The 519 Community Centre – For LGBTQ2S Youth Ages 16 to 29
    - 519 Church Street | <https://www.the519.org/programs/housing-services> | 416-355-6782
    - PHONE/EMAIL SUPPORT ONLY: Email [vwatson@the519.org](mailto:vwatson@the519.org) to set up
  - Friends of Ruby (formerly Egale Youth Services) – For LGBTQ2S Youth up to Age 29
    - 489 Queen Street E, LL01 | <http://friendsofruby.ca/> | 416-359-0237 | [info@friendsofruby.ca](mailto:info@friendsofruby.ca)
    - PHONE/EMAIL SUPPORT ONLY: contact the above phone number/email to access crisis supports, housing help
- [Yonge Street Mission \(YSM\) Evergreen Services](#)
- Drop-In Centres, Free Meals, and Other Supports:
  - 211 Central
    - 24/7 | <https://www.211toronto.ca/> | TTY 1-888-340-1001
    - Live Text Chat Support available Monday-Friday 7am-9pm by texting 21166
  - Chalmers Bot
    - 24/7 | <https://chalmers.app/>
    - A web/phone app that uses your current location to find the closest free meal/drop-in/clothing resource

- [Glad Day Book Shop](#)
  - 499 Church Street | | 416-901-6600
  - Currently offering an emergency fund for LGBTQ2S artists, tip-based workers, and performers. Check the website for how to apply

### **Law and Legal Services:**

- [Steps to Justice: COVID-19: Updates on the law and legal services](#)
- For Questions About Landlords, Evictions, and Human Rights:
  - Tenant Hotline
    - Monday- Friday, 8:30am-6pm | 416-921-9494
  - Landlord & Tenant Board
    - Monday-Friday, 8:30am-5pm | 416-645-8080
- Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation (CERA)
  - <http://www.equalityrights.org/> | 416-944-0087 | [cera@equalityrights.org](mailto:cera@equalityrights.org)

### **Newcomer Support Services:**

- [Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada \(IRB\)](#)
- Immigrants, Refugees and Canadian Citizenship Canada Client Support Services 1-888-242-2100
- YMCA Newcomer Information Centre
  - Hotline 416-968-9622 | Email: [immigrantservices@ymcagta.org](mailto:immigrantservices@ymcagta.org)
- Government of Ontario
  - Services for Newcomers and Refugees in Ontario  
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/services-newcomers-and-refugees#section-0>
- Settlement.Org
  - Newcomer Services List in Toronto  
<https://settlement.org/findhelp/ontario/toronto/settlement-services/>
  - City of Toronto Resources:
    - <https://settlement.org/findhelp/ontario/toronto/>

**The Latest on COVID-19:**

- [Public Health Agency of Canada \(website\)](#)
- [Public Health Agency of Canada about COVID-19 \(YouTube\)](#)
- [Public Health Agency of Canada – Symptoms and Treatment](#)
- [Public Health Agency of Canada – Being Prepared](#)

**Let's keep safe, supported and connected!**